

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for forming a fabric comprising:

forming a nonwoven web that defines a first surface and a second surface, said nonwoven web comprising splittable multicomponent fibers having individual segments exposed on an outer perimeter thereof,

adhering said first surface of said nonwoven web to a first creping surface;

creping said web from said first creping surface; and

thereafter, entangling said creped nonwoven web such that at least a portion of said individual segments become separated from said multicomponent fibers.

2. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said creped nonwoven web is entangled with a fibrous material that includes cellulosic fibers.

3. A method as defined in claim 2, wherein said fibrous material further contains synthetic staple fibers.

4. A method as defined in claim 3, wherein said synthetic staple fibers comprise between about 10% to about 20% by weight of said fibrous material.

5. A method as defined in claim 3, wherein said synthetic staple fibers have an average fiber length of between about 0.25 inches to about 0.375 inches.

6. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said multicomponent fibers have a configuration selected from the group consisting of circular, square, multilobal, ribbon, and combinations thereof.

7. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said multicomponent fibers comprise polyethylene, polypropylene, polyester, nylon, and combinations thereof.

8. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said multicomponent fibers are continuous spunbonded thermoplastic fibers.

9. A method as defined in claim 1, further comprising applying a creping adhesive to said first surface of said nonwoven web in a spaced-apart pattern such that said first surface is adhered to said creping surface according to said spaced-apart pattern.

5 10. A method as defined in claim 1, further comprising adhering said second surface of said nonwoven web to a second creping surface and creping said web from said second surface.

10 11. A method as defined in claim 10, further comprising applying a creping adhesive to said second surface of said nonwoven web in a spaced-apart pattern such that said second surface is adhered to said creping surface according to said spaced-apart pattern.

12. A method as defined in claim 1, further comprising stretching said nonwoven web before said nonwoven web is creped.

15 13. A method as defined in claim 12, wherein said nonwoven web is mechanically stretched in the machine direction.

14. A method as defined in claim 13, wherein said nonwoven web is stretched by about 10% to about 100% of its initial length.

15 15. A method as defined in claim 13, wherein said nonwoven web is stretched by about 25% to about 75% of its initial length.

20 16. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said creped nonwoven web is hydraulically entangled.

17. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein said nonwoven web is entangled at a water pressure of between about 100 pounds per square inch to about 3000 pounds per square inch.

25 18. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein said nonwoven web is entangled at a water pressure of between about 120 pounds per square inch to about 500 pounds per square inch.

30 19. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein said nonwoven web is entangled at a water pressure of between about 150 pounds per square inch to about 180 pounds per square inch.

20. A composite fabric comprising a creped nonwoven web entangled with a fibrous material that contains cellulosic fibers, said creped nonwoven web being formed from splittable multicomponent thermoplastic fibers having individual segments exposed on an outer perimeter thereof.

21. A composite fabric as defined in claim 20, wherein said fibrous material further contains synthetic staple fibers.

22. A composite fabric as defined in claim 21, wherein said synthetic staple fibers comprise between about 10% to about 20% by weight of said fibrous material.

23. A composite fabric as defined in claim 21, wherein said synthetic staple fibers have an average fiber length of between about 0.25 inches to about 0.375 inches.

24. A composite fabric as defined in claim 20, wherein said multicomponent fibers have a configuration selected from the group consisting of circular, square, multilobal, ribbon, and combinations thereof.

25. A composite fabric as defined in claim 20, wherein said multicomponent fibers comprise polyethylene, polypropylene, polyester, nylon, and combinations thereof.

26. A composite fabric as defined in claim 20, wherein said multicomponent fibers are continuous spunbonded thermoplastic fibers.

27. A composite fabric as defined in claim 20, wherein said nonwoven web is also mechanically stretched in the machine direction.

28. A composite fabric as defined in claim 27, wherein said nonwoven web is stretched by about 10% to about 100% of its initial length.

29. A composite fabric as defined in claim 27, wherein said nonwoven web is stretched by about 25% to about 75% of its initial length.

30. A composite fabric as defined in claim 20, wherein said nonwoven web is hydraulically entangled with said fibrous material.

31. A composite fabric comprising a nonwoven web that contains microfolds imparted by creping, said nonwoven web being formed from continuous spunbonded multicomponent thermoplastic fibers and individual segments separated therefrom, said nonwoven web being integrally entangled with a fibrous material that contains pulp fibers.

32. A composite fabric as defined in claim 31, wherein said nonwoven web has also been mechanically stretched in the machine direction.

33. A composite fabric as defined in claim 32, wherein said nonwoven web has been stretched by about 10% to about 100% of its initial length.

34. A composite fabric as defined in claim 34, wherein said nonwoven web has been stretched by about 25% to about 75% of its initial length.

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